

Story 939 (1977 Tape 25)

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The Faithless Sister and the Faithful Nephew

Once there was and once there was not a padişah who had three sons and a daughter. One day he expressed his wishes about what should be done after his death. Among the things that he said was this: "Oh, my sons, after my death if you are still alive, you will come one day to a division of the road. One part will split off to the left and the other part will split off to the right. You should never take the road that goes to the left."

His sons all answered, "All right, Father, we shall always follow your wish in this matter."

Time came, time went, and after a while the padişah died. Shortly after that, the oldest son announced, "I intend to set forth on a journey, but when I reach the fork in the road, I shall take the left branch. I want to see what will happen along that branch."

When the oldest son reached the fork in the road, he turned left. He walked and walked, traveling for quite a long distance. After a while he came upon a giant who was lying right in the middle of the road. This giant said,

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"O human being! I was searching for you in the dark, but here you have come to me in the light. Welcome, welcome! When should I start fighting with you? If you wish, I can start right now." Saying this, the giant suddenly cut off the boy's head and threw it into his cave.

After a considerable time had passed, the middle son said, "My older brother took the left-hand road at the intersection, and we have never heard from him since that time. I shall follow his tracks, choosing the road to the left, just as he did."

Having taken the left branch at the intersection, the middle son walked a great distance. After some time, he too reached the place where the giant lay in the middle of the road. The giant said, "O human being I have killed thirty-eight people so far, and you will make thirty-nine. But after I have killed forty, I shall kill no more. How should I fight against you?"

The middle brother was as terrified as his older brother had been, and he was unable to utter even a single word. The giant cut off the head of the middle brother and threw it into his cave--the thirty-ninth human head to go into that cave

After three months had passed, the youngest son said to his sister, "Dear Sister, I shall go and search for our two

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older brothers. If I do not return after three months have passed, you follow the left-hand road to look for me."

The girl said, "All right, Brother. I shall do just as you say."

The youngest son set forth on his journey, and when he came to the fork in the road, he took the left-hand branch just as his two brothers had done. And just like his brothers, he too came to the place where the giant lay in the middle of the road. The giant called, "O human being! Welcome, welcome! I have already killed thirty-nine human beings and you will make the fortieth. After I have killed you, I shall kill no more. How should we fight? Should we use swords?"

"It makes no difference to me," said the youngest son "What weapon do you usually use?"

Frightened by the confident manner of the youngest son, the giant said, "O son of human beings Please do not kill me. I have a great hoard of treasure, more than you could possibly spend between now and the time of your death. Come now--forgive me! Place me inside the cave and put this huge and heavy millstone over the entrance so that I could never get out again. Only if someone should pour hot water on this millstone would I be able to escape. And all of my treasure would be yours."

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The youngest son thought about this for a few minutes and found the giant's proposal reasonable. He placed the giant in the cave and covered its entrance with the huge millstone. After that, he climbed to the roof of the giant's house, where he sat to await the arrival of his sister

Time passed very slowly, but at last the day came when he saw the approach of his weeping sister. She had come in search of him, examining the forests on both sides of the road as she came. As soon as he saw her, the youngest son shouted, "Oh, Sister Oh, Sister I am here! Come this way!" Very happy to see each other after their long separation, the brother and sister embraced and kissed each other.

They began then to live in the house of the giant boy said, "My dear Sister, I shall go hunting every day, and you can cook our meals and keep the house clean. But there is one thing that I must warn you about: Never, never pour hot water on the millstone covering the mouth of yonder cave.

Time passed, and the brother continued to hunt every day while the sister cooked their food and cleaned the house. One day while her brother was away hunting in the forest, the girl thought to herself, "My brother told me not

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to pour hot water on that millstone, but he did not explain just why I shouldn't do that. I should like to try pouring hot water on it, just to see what would happen."

The girl poured hot water on the millstone, and almost immediately the stone began to move, and soon the giant burst forth from the cave. Because the girl had no one there to help her, the giant forced her to marry him. She was helpless to do anything but accept his offer of marriage. He then threatened her, saying, "If you say a single word about our relationship, I shall kill you at once." Thus the girl was unable to tell her brother about her marriage to the giant.

While the brother was at home after having hunted all day, the giant hid in the cave. As soon as the brother left, the giant returned to his wife and to his former home

As the days passed, the relationship between the giant and the girl continued. After a while, however, the belly of the girl began to grow larger and larger. Her brother grew anxious about this and asked what was happening to her belly. "How should I know?" asked the girl. "What could happen here in these desolate mountains, Brother? It must be something sent by God!"

The innocent brother answered, "Well, if it is something sent by God, then there is nothing that we can do but accept it."

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After a while longer the girl gave birth to a baby. Because the child was the son of a giant, he was very large and very strong. As days and weeks passed, the youngest brother became more and more confused by this. The uncle continued to be surprised at the speed of the baby's growth.

One day the giant said to his wife, "Today when your brother returns home, you must pretend to be ill. You will say to him, 'Oh, Brother, I am very sick, and the only thing that can cure my sickness is an apple from the tree that grows behind the Seven Mountains.' When your brother goes to get that apple, the seven-headed dragon that lives there will kill him."

The girl said, "All right." She went to bed at once and pretended to be very sick.

When her brother returned home from hunting, he asked her, "What is the matter? What has happened?"

"Oh, my dear Brother, I am very ill. The doctors have told me that if I wish to recover, I must eat an apple from the magic apple tree that grows behind the Seven Mountains."

The honest brother said, "All right, my dear Sister. I shall get one of those apples for you. I wish to see you healthy again."

But the son of the giant had heard his father's and mother's conversation, and because he loved his uncle, he

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decided to save that uncle. Being the son of a giant, he was himself very large and strong. He therefore preceded his uncle to the Seven Mountains and killed the seven-headed dragon that guarded the apple tree. Shortly after this his uncle arrived, panting. The uncle picked several of the apples and started home without knowing anything at all about his sister's evil plotting.

The son of the giant reached home before his uncle did. He observed that his mother was standing near the window anxiously watching for her brother. When she saw him coming, she felt relieved but confused. What was she going to do now? When the brother gave her the apples he had brought she ate them at once and pretended that they had cured her illness. She got out of bed and said, "Oh, thank you, Brother. I feel well now."

Two or three days later the giant went to the house to be with his wife, as he did every day after the brother gone hunting. He said to his wife, "Well, your brother managed to return alive from the Seven Mountains. Now we shall do something different. I shall hide above the door of this room, and when your brother enters the room, I shall stick this sword into his head."

Again, however, the son of the giant overheard the plotting of his father and mother. When the boy saw his

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uncle coming home, he said to him, "Please, Uncle, put me up on your shoulders and carry me through the front door of the house and into the next room.

Confused, the uncle said, "Oh, my Nephew, how can I carry you on my back? What ever gave you such an idea?" When the son of the giant insisted on his request and started crying, the uncle picked him up, put him on his shoulders, and carried him through the front door and into the next room. As they were passing through the doorway, the giant saw that only his son was visible above his brother-in-law, and thus he was unable to stab his brother-in-law

The following day the giant said to his wife, "Your brother was saved from death for a second time. But tonight I shall hide beneath the threshold, and when he passes through the doorway, I shall take my sword and pierce him from his feet right up through his head."

Once again the son of the giant overheard the plotting of his father and mother. When his uncle returned from the forest in the evening, the boy ran to him and said, "My Uncle, yesterday you carried me through the front door, today I shall carry you."

Confused even more than he had been the day before, uncle said, "Oh, but my Nephew, you are still only a child. You cannot carry me."

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But the son of the giant insisted on doing what he had proposed. Hoisting his uncle upon his back, he carried him through the front door and into the next room. Because of this, the giant was again unable to kill his brother-in-law.

The following day the treacherous sister said very angrily to her husband, "Don't you try anything else to my brother. This time I shall kill him with my own hands when he returns!"

Overhearing their conversation as he had done every time before, the son of the giant decided to watch his mother very closely. When she was preparing the evening meal, she put poison into the food for her brother. The nephew observed this. When it was supper time, the nephew said "Uncle, this time let us both eat my meal first, and then we shall both eat yours."

Again the uncle was confused by this strange request, but he decided to accept his nephew's suggestion. While they were eating the nephew's meal, a cat came to the table. When the son of the giant gave the cat his uncle's meal to eat, the cat swallowed only a few mouthfuls before it fell over dead. When the uncle saw this, he said, "Oh, God! What happened to that cat?"

This time the son of the giant had to explain everything. He said, "Dear Uncle, my father is a giant. I am the son of

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a giant. My mother and father decided several days ago to kill you, but I have saved you from each of their plots." He then told his uncle about each of the attempts to kill him and how his death had been prevented.

Very sadly the uncle said to the boy, "All right, Nephew. I cannot say what to do to your mother, but I shall kill your father.

The son of the giant killed his mother, and the uncle killed the boy's father. They then put the two bodies into a large sack. Throwing the sack into the cave, they sealed the cave mouth with many heavy rocks.

After that was done, the uncle said, "My Nephew, will cook my food from now on."

"Very well, Uncle," said the boy.

They lived together there for some time. Every day the uncle would go to the forest, sometimes to hunt, sometimes to cut firewood. The nephew took care of the house and prepared all of their meals. Their time passed quietly. One day, however, the fire went out as the boy was cooking some meat. He went to the forest to get more wood, but once he was there, he saw some smoke arising in the distance. Following the smoke, he came to a camp fire around which forty giants were sleeping as their food was cooking in a forty-handled cauldron. The boy lifted the cauldron with

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one hand and then scooped coals from beneath it with his other hand.

One of the giants saw the boy doing this, and he immediately awakened his thirty-nine brothers. He shouted, "Come! Come! Wake up! Wake up! Did you not see that young giant? With one hand he lifted the cauldron which all forty of us together cannot lift! He is very powerful! He took some coals from our fire and departed. Quick, now, let us blow on his coals and extinguish them! Then when he returns here for more, we can learn who he is and what he is. Is he a jinn or a human being? We shall discover that."

All forty giants began to blow out their breath as hard as they could, and the gale they created did put out the fire that the young man was carrying away. When he returned to the giants' camp fire for more coals, he was quickly surrounded by all forty giants. They asked him many questions. "Who are you?" one asked.

"Are you a human being?" a second asked.

"Where have you come from?" asked a third.

Another said, "We are forty giant brothers, but all of us together cannot pick up that cauldron which you lifted with one hand! We cannot fight against you, for you are much stronger than we are. You can help us, however, for we

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are faced with a very difficult problem which we cannot solve by ourselves."

boy said, "Please let me go now. My uncle will soon return home, and when he does, I must have his evening meal ready."

the forty giants were very insistent in their demand and would not allow the boy to leave. Helpless in this situation, the boy asked them, "What is the great problem with which you need help?"

of the forty giants said, "We are engaged in warfare with a very powerful padişah in order to secure his two daughters as wives for two of us. You could help us. That padişah has a forty-story palace in which there are no windows or doors, and so there is no way in which we can enter it."

young giant said, "All right, all right! I shall help you, but first you will have to make forty iron cannon-balls for me. I shall return tomorrow, and I shall get the two daughters of the padişah for you." The young giant then went home.

When the uncle returned and found that the evening meal had not yet been prepared, he asked, "My Nephew, what happened to you? Why didn't you prepare the evening meal?"

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The boy answered, "My dear Uncle, my fire died out today, and I had to look for a place where I could get a new fire. Going into the forest, I came to the cottage of a very old woman. She not only gave me some fire, but she also invited me to her home for lunch tomorrow. May I go?"

The uncle said, "Of course, my Nephew! You are very lonely here. You may go."

The next day the young giant went to the home of the forty giants. They gave him the forty iron cannonballs which they had made. By using these cannonballs, the young giant was able to climb to the roof of the palace,¹ where there was a large door, like a skylight, which was an entrance to the building.

The forty giants had followed the young man, and they now began to climb up the wall of the palace, just as he had done. But as each of the forty giants reached the edge of the roof, the young giant drew his sword, killed him, and threw the body back down to the ground.

After he had disposed of all forty giants in that the young giant opened the skylight and looked inside the building. Much to his surprise, he found within a terrible

¹ Cannonballs are, of course a gross anachronism in such an ancient tale. Just how the young giant used these balls to scale the skyscraper (also an obvious anachronism) is not explained.

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dragon trying to kill the two daughters of the padişah.

Drawing his sword again, he immediately cut off the head of this dragon, though the dragon, in a desperate attempt to save his own life, managed to scratch the back of the young giant.

After the dragon had been slain, the very happy princesses said to the young giant, "You saved our lives! Our father is on the battlefield right now, but he will soon return. You wait here until he has come home."

But the young giant did not accept this invitation. He said, "I cannot stay here. I must return to my home." He returned at once to his home, cooked a meal, and waited patiently for the arrival of his uncle.

When the padişah came back to his palace from the battlefield, he saw at once that all his worst enemies--the forty giants and the terrible dragon--had been destroyed. Knowing now that his daughters would be safe, he felt very happy. He had his men beat drums steadily for forty days, and he had town criers make this announcement everywhere: "Whoever it was that saved the daughters of the padişah should come to the palace to receive his reward." But no one came

After this had been going on for thirty-nine days, young giant asked, "Dear Uncle, why are men beating those drums all the time?"

The uncle answered saying, "Oh, my Nephew, it is no concern of ours. Someone killed forty giants and in doing so saved the daughters of the padişah. Now the padişah is trying to identify the person who did this in order to give him a reward. Anyway, we didn't do it, and so that is not our problem."

The young giant said, "But, Uncle, I should like to go there to see what is going on. Couldn't we at least go to the padişah's palace?" The uncle agreed to this proposal, and the two of them went to the palace.

In the meantime, the daughters of the padişah were sitting on the balcony of the palace and observing as closely as possible each of the men passing along in the crowd below. When the nephew and uncle passed beneath the balcony, the princesses recognized the young giant at once, and they pointed him out to their father

Summoning the young giant into the palace, the padişah said to him, "Oh, young man, you saved both my daughters and my kingdom. You may ask from me anything that you wish.

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line The young giant responded, "My great Padişah, I wish only your good health."²

But the ruler did not accept that response. He said, "My health is of no use to you. Tell me what you would really like from me."

This time the young giant said, "I should like to have give your two daughters as wives to my uncle."

The padişah was badly confused by this request. He asked, "Do you really want me to give my two daughters to your uncle instead of to you? That does not make any sense. However, if that is really your wish, then I shall give my two daughters to your uncle."

The uncle and the two princesses were married. One after a short time had passed, the young giant said to uncle, "Dear Uncle, you are now married and have two wives. Let me go now and travel about the world for a while." The uncle gave him permission to go.

When the young giant left home, he went straight to the padişah's palace again, because just before he had killed the forty giants, they had revealed to him secrets about the slender tree that grew before the palace and about the public *beach*.

² This is the proper response--at least in folktales. It is usually made three times before an actual wish is expressed.

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bath that stood nearby. The giants had said to him, "O young giant, when you approach the palace be very careful to stay away from a slender tree that grows before the building and from a nearby bath. Whoever passes too close to that tree will disappear from sight, and the same thing may happen to anyone who enters the bath.

Knowing these secrets, the young giant went to the slender tree, drew his sword, and split that tree into two equal parts. Examining the blade of his sword then to see if it had suffered any damage, he found a very long hair on the tip of the sword. He picked up this very carefully and placed it in his traveling pouch. Going then to the bath he scattered all the contents of its interior except for a metal bowl, which he took with him. He then continued on his journey.

After traveling a great distance, the young giant came to a large and beautiful palace which seemed to be unoccupied. Feeling exhausted by now, he entered this palace and at once fell asleep.

Meanwhile, the ⁴⁰⁻⁴²fairies who had been inside the slender tree and the public bath³ had become birds and flown away.

³ Many Turkish people believe that ^{transformation}all public baths are haunted by "little folk." Some believe this so firmly that they will not pass close to a bath at night. Several ATON tales testify to the belief that baths are haunted.

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The two met each other, and they flew together until they came to the palace in which the young giant was sleeping. They landed on a windowsill of that palace and began talking to each other. One said, "Oh, Sister, today a large human being came to the slender tree in which I lived. He split my tree right down the middle, and I came close to losing my life. As his sword passed through the tree, it cut off of my hair."

The other fairy said, "Ah, yes That same large human being came to my bath, too. He slashed in every direction with his sword, destroying much that was inside the bath. He came very close to killing me. I just barely escaped one of his blows."

was meeting
The young giant heard their entire conversation. When they had finished speaking, he showed them the hair that had come from inside the tree and the metal bowl that had come from within the bath. As soon as the fairies saw these objects, they turned at once into very beautiful girls. They said to him, "Now you must marry us

The young giant said, "Very well! I shall marry both of you, but before I do so, you must carry this palace, with all its gardens, to a place right opposite my uncle's palace."

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The fairy girls did exactly what the young giant had requested, placing their palace right across from the palace of his uncle. But when the palace was set in place, it cast some shadows across the palace of his uncle. Both the wives of the uncle began to shout at the fairy girls. Very sad, the fairy girls began to cry, and their crying wakened the young giant. "What is the matter?" he asked.

They said, "Those women in the next palace used very harsh language to us when our palace cast some shadows on theirs. Who are they, anyway?"

The young giant explained, "They are the wives of my dear uncle. We must all live together peacefully here."

After that, the young giant and the two fairy girls celebrated their marriage in a wedding that lasted for forty days and forty nights. All of them had their wishes fulfilled.